

Message Text

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SUBJECT: US-USSR SEMINAR OF WRITERS, CRITICS AND PUBLISHERS

REF: A. MOSCOW 12882; B. STATE 187397

1. DEPTOFFS MET AT DEPT SEPTEMBER 10 (PRIOR RECEIPT REFTEL
A) WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR US WRITERS AND PUBLISHERS
ORGANIZATIONS TO DISCUSS SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR JOINT SEMINAR
OF WRITERS, CRITICS AND PUBLISHERS. ATTENDING REPRESENTING
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLISHERS (AAP) WERE PRESIDENT
TOWNSEND HOOPES, ROBERT BERNSTEIN OF RANDOM HOUSE, ROGER
STRAUS OF FARRAR, STRAUS, GIROUX, AND ALLEN SCHWARTZ, AT-
TORNEY; FOR PEN CLUB, KIRSTEN MICHALSKI, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY;
FOR NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS, PRESIDENT HARRI-
SON SALISBURY.

2. AFTER DETAILED DISCUSSION OF SOVIET PROPOSAL AND POSSIB-
ILITIES FOR US RESPONSE, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THREE
ORGANIZATIONS AGREED TO ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE THE SOVIET PRO-
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POSAL FOR A SEMINAR, TO SELECT A TEN-PERSON DELEGATION WHICH
WOULD REPRESENT THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS, AND TO PROPOSE LATE
JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY AS THE TIME FOR THE FIRST MEET-
ING OF THE SEMINAR IN THE USSR. THERE WAS ALSO GENERAL AG-

REEMENT ON ADVISABILITY OF CONDUCTING RETURN SEMINAR IN THE US AT LATER DATE. DEPT INDICATED WILLINGNESS FUND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR USDEL AND CONTRIBUTE TO COSTS OF HOSTING RETURN SOVDEL.

3. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO FORM A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION INCLUDING MANY PRESTIGIOUS FIGURES IN THE WRITING AND PUBLISHING PROFESSIONS, AND ARE APPROACHING THE SEMINAR IN A SERIOUS AND CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER. THE DIFFICULT ISSUES REFERRED TO IN REFTEL B ARE EXPECTED TO ARISE; BUT WE ARE HOPEFUL THEY CAN BE DISCUSSED POSITIVELY AND THAT THEY WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE SEMINAR AND THE FUTURE COURSE OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS. IT WAS AGREED THAT SENSITIVE ISSUES WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE PROPOSED AS AGENDA ITEMS, BUT WOULD BE LEFT FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSION.

4. US PARTICIPANTS ARE INTERESTED IN SEMINAR AS FIRST STEP IN ESTABLISHING CONTINUING FORUM WHERE CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN WRITING, LITERARY CRITICISM AND PUBLISHING CAN BE DISCUSSED. THEY WILL BE INTERESTED, INTER ALIA, IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF AND ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH WIDER RANGE OF SOVIET WRITERS, AS WELL AS SEEKING MEANS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH KNOWN WRITERS. IMPROVED POSSIBILITIES FOR PUBLISHING SOVIET AUTHORS HERE AND US AUTHORS IN THE SOVIET UNION ALSO OF INTEREST.

5. REQUEST EMBASSY INFORM SOVIETS SOONEST THAT BOTH DEPT AND PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVE THAT SEMINAR HAS CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL AND WOULD BE MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS. YOU SHOULD REQUEST EARLY RESPONSE REGARDING PROPOSED DATES, AND AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPAL TO PROCEED WITH PLANNING.

6. SINCE NO FIRM DECISION RE PROPOSED CONFERENCE WILL BE MADE UNTIL FEDORENKO FOCUSES ON QUESTION, AND IN VIEW OF HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST AND POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION ON US SIDE, SUGGEST THAT IN ADDITION TO MAKING APPROACH REQUESTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PARA 5, EMBASSY ALSO SEEK DISCUSS CONFERENCE DIRECTLY WITH FEDORENKO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER HIS RETURN. THIS CONNECTION, FEDORENKO MAY DECIDE, IN VIEW OF BROAD GUAGE AND HIGH LEVEL OF POTENTIAL US PARTICIPATION, THAT SOVIET HOST SHOULD BE ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN "JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LITERATURE". FYI: PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDERED THAT "SATURDAY REVIEW", OR ANY OTHER SINGLE US PUBLICATION WAS TOO NARROW A BASE ON WHICH TO BUILD USDEL. END FYI. IF FEDORENKO SHOULD QUESTION INCLUSION OF AAP REPRESENTATIVES ON DELEGATION, EMBASSY MAY POINT OUT THAT AAP ROLE WILL BE IMPORTANT TO SOVIET EFFORTS INCREASE PUBLICATION OF THEIR AUTHORS IN THE US.

7. POTENTIAL US DELEGATION WILL BE SELECTED AND DRAFT AGENDA FORMULATED OVER NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS (DEPT HAS ADVISED ORGANIZERS OF TENTATIVENESS OF SOVIET PROPOSAL). WE WILL FORWARD DRAFT AGENDA FOR SUBMISSION TO SOVIETS AS SOON AS IT IS WORKED OUT. WE WILL ALSO KEEP EMBASSY ADVISED RE COMPOSITION OF DELEGATION, BUT WOULD HOPE TO GET SOVIET AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPAL TO CONFERENCE PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED DELEGATION MEMBERS. KISSINGER

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